

## **Lake Mead/Las Vegas Wash Program**

**LOCATION:** Clark County, Nevada.

**DESCRIPTION/JUSTIFICATION:** The Las Vegas Wash plays an important role in environmental and water resource issues in Southern Nevada. Approximately 25 percent of the Las Vegas Wash is owned by Reclamation. Historically, the Las Vegas Wash was an ephemeral stream carrying storm flows from the Las Vegas Valley to the Colorado River and Lake Mead. Urban development over the past 60 years has resulted in continuous treated wastewater discharges that provided optimum conditions for the formation of the wetlands that helped remove nutrients from these wastewater flows. However, as the rate of these discharges increased, erosion also increased, gradually destroying the existing wetlands and wildlife habitat.

Today, the Las Vegas Wash is a perennial stream with flows that consist of four components: treated wastewater, storm water, urban runoff, and shallow ground water. Accelerating erosion, declining water quality, and loss of wildlife habitat are some of the more pressing issues. Over the years, approximately 4 to 5 million cubic yards of sediment and more than 470 acres of wetlands have been lost due to erosion. Because of the increased channelization and flows, as well as contaminated shallow groundwater, there are many problems to be resolved including reduction of erosion, improvement of water quality, and restoration of the wetlands and wildlife habitat.

Due to the federally owned land in Las Vegas Wash, and the impact of drainage from this land to the Colorado River and Lake Mead, Reclamation has an interest in performing an economic and engineering evaluation to determine if there is a Federal role in maintaining and improving water quality in the Wash. Reclamation also built the Robert B. Griffith Project (formerly Southern Nevada Water Project), and outflows from that project affect the Wash.

Local agencies that are participating in Wash activities include the Clark County Flood Control District, Clark County Department of Parks and Recreation, Southern Nevada Water Authority, Las Vegas Valley Water District, Clark County Sanitation District, City of Henderson, and City of Las Vegas. Local agencies' contribution is expected to be at a minimum of 50 percent of the program costs.

**AUTHORIZATION:** P.L. 74-46, Soil and Moisture Conservation Act, April 27, 1935; and P.L. 469, Amend Colorado River Front Work and Levee System Act, June 28, 1946, and P.L. 106-541, Section 529, Water Resources Development Act of 2000, December 11, 2000.

**COMPLETION DATA:** Completion date has not been finalized.

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### SUMMARIZED FINANCIAL DATA

#### Program Financial Data

Activity	FY 2001	FY 2002
Water and Energy Management and Development	\$3,071,596	\$2,000,000
Total Program	\$3,071,596	\$2,000,000
Prior Year Funds	(172,596)	0
Non-Federal	(1,399,000)	(1,000,000)
Enacted	\$1,500,000	\$1,000,000
Underfinancing	(98,000)	0
FY 2001 Rescission (P.L. 106-554)	(3,000)	0
Total Reclamation Allotment	\$1,399,000	\$1,000,000

#### WORK PROPOSED FOR FY 2002:

**Water and Energy Management and Development** - Continues work on monitoring water, soil, and tissue at the Clark County Wetlands Park, Lake Mead, and Las Vegas Wash. Continues research and development of wetlands performance under various conditions and water sources. Continues detailed investigation of off-channel wetlands.

	\$2,000,000
Non-Federal - Various	<u>(1,000,000)</u>

Subtotal, Water and Energy Management and Development	<b><u>\$1,000,000</u></b>
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<b>Reclamation Request</b>	<b>\$1,000,000</b>
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